



Chet

Dobis

State Representative • District 13

Senior citizens must file for expanded tax cut by May 10

Dear Friends,

The Indiana General Assembly approved an important property tax deduction in 1999. Eligible Hoosiers must file an application by May 10 in order to receive the tax break.

Last year, we increased the property tax deduction for people over 65 years of age from \$1,000 to \$2,000. We also expanded both the income limits and assessed valuation amounts that determine if a person qualifies for the deduction, resulting in more people receiving this tax cut.

To receive the deduction, a person must have a maximum annual income of less than \$25,000, and own property with a maximum assessed valuation of less than \$23,000.

In order to make sure that you can get the deduction, you must file an application with the County Auditor's office before May 10. I encourage anyone who believes he or she may qualify under the new guidelines to contact the auditor. Anyone who qualified in past years for the deduction does not have to re-apply.

Most seniors also qualify for an additional income tax deduction, which was increased from \$1,000 to \$1,500. Each qualified taxpayer may take this deduction — meaning married couples may now deduct \$3,000 from their adjusted gross income.

These tax breaks are two of several approved by the Legislature over the past four years that will return nearly \$1.5 billion to the people of Indiana.

I have included details of other legislation important to senior citizens on the back of this postcard.

Sincerely,

Chet

Legislation benefits seniors

\$20 million for prescription drugs -- Senior citizens on lower incomes should not have to choose between buying food or the prescription drugs they need to remain healthy. Thanks to the legislation allocating money from the national tobacco settlement, they won't have to make that decision.

The final bill includes \$20 million to help low-income seniors purchase prescription drugs. From my visits around the district, this is one of the most pressing concerns among older Hoosiers. Some people even have been forced to drive as far as Canada to get these drugs at a more affordable rate.

Since health care was one of the priorities for spending tobacco settlement funds, I believe it was important to help seniors get the drugs they need to avoid their illnesses.

CHOICE -- The CHOICE program makes it possible for many Indiana senior citizens to continue living in their homes rather than checking into nursing homes. Services provided include health care, home cleaning, nutrition, and transportation. In 1999, we increased the annual funding for CHOICE to \$42.6 million.

Long-Term Care -- Seniors who are covered under Medicaid for their nursing home services are allowed a small amount of income each month for personal expenses. This is commonly called a Personal Needs Allowance (PNA). In 1999, the General Assembly enacted Senate Enrolled Act 606, which increased the PNA from \$35 to \$50 per month. The legislature also established a new state income tax deduction for the amount of long-term health care insurance premiums that takes effect this year.

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